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## **News in Salmon Recovery**

### **NOAA Fisheries and Oregon Collaborate on a New Plan for Managing Siltcoos and Tahkenitch Lakes Coho Salmon**

The next generation of fisheries management plans - and the first of its kind along the Oregon Coast - was announced today by NOAA Fisheries. The Fisheries Management and Evaluation Plan, or FMEP, depends on local conditions and the health or viability of local coho salmon populations to set fishing regulations for Siltcoos and Tahkenitch Lakes near Florence, Oregon.

Oregon Coastal coho salmon have been rebounding after sinking to dangerously low levels during the 1990s. "We are pleased that public fishing will be possible without deterring salmon recovery under this new plan," said Rob Jones, Chief of Hatcheries and Inland Fisheries for NOAA Fisheries' new Salmon Recovery Division. "The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife deserves a great deal of credit for developing this FMEP" says Jones. The FMEP establishes safe levels of fishing in the lakes after they were closed to public fishing ten years ago because of declining coho salmon numbers. The FMEP will be in place for the remainder of this season and for future seasons, and be subject to continued refinement based on new information and experience with the fisheries.

The FMEP concept was created under the Endangered Species Act by NOAA Fisheries as an incentive for state, tribal, local and Federal jurisdictions to work together on innovative advances in harvest management. The concept reasons that safe levels of fishing can and should be considered as salmon and steelhead health improves. FMEPs are already in affect for Willamette Basin spring chinook salmon and steelhead, and Oregon and Washington are working on five new FMEPs for salmon, trout, sturgeon, and smelt fisheries in Lower Columbia River tributary streams. Improved fishery management and streamlined decision-making are the motivation behind FMEPs.

Coastwide management of Oregon Coastal coho saw harvest rates range between 40 and 90 percent until the early 1990s. Adjustments implemented in 1993 reduced harvest rates on wild coho salmon to about 12 percent. This FMEP is designed specifically for Siltcoos and Tahkenitch Lakes and restores a safe level of fishing, contingent upon the health of local coho populations. If coho do not meet viability thresholds for adult spawners, productivity, diversity, distribution, and nutrient replenishment, no fisheries would open in the lake systems. The adult spawner threshold and 2003 forecasted coho returns are 3,300 and 6,000 for Siltcoos Lake and 2,200 and 5,000 for Tahkenitch Lake.

Development of the FMEP involved two public comment periods and public meetings hosted by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and NOAA Fisheries. The FMEP is built on: first, tracking coho population condition and developing improved predictors for forecasting coho status; second, streamlining decisions for setting fishing regulations; third, monitoring any lake fisheries for compliance with regulations and for determining affects on coho populations; and fourth, adjusting fisheries management based on new information and experience.

A State/Federal/public partnership delivered this FMEP, and working solutions to factors still limiting salmon recovery will depend on more collaboration like this.

For more information, see the NOAA Fisheries website at [www.nwr.noaa.gov](http://www.nwr.noaa.gov).